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she is made to smell samôn-net, a plant (the *Nigella sativa*), which is put in an earthen pot, strongly heated, and then triturated into the shape of a ball. The odour is not exactly such as one would recognise as calculated to exhilarate any one, but probably after the hot bricks and the se sein everything else comes as a matter of detail. All this is done to drive out the noxious humours which are supposed to be generated by the birth of a child. On the seventh day the woman takes an elementary kind of Turkish bath. She sits over a large jar of boiling water, medicated with tamarind twigs and a few other kinds of leaves and grasses, with a blanket over her. After about an hour of this she has a cold bath, and is then free to do as she pleases. She usually goes to bed.

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It might be supposed that under this treatment death in child-bearing would be very frequent, but as far as imperfect statistics can show the percentage is not much higher than in other countries. The result, however, appears in another way. A woman ages up ten or fifteen years for every child she has. It is satisfactory to notice that in all the larger towns in Lower Burma the more unpleasant features are fading away before the example and influence of women of other nationalities. In the jungle and in Upper Burma, however, ancient use and wont still prevail, and the young mother of fourteen or fifteen is shrivelled into thirty with her first baby.

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If a woman gives birth to a still-born child, a piece of iron is placed in the cloth in which the body is wrapped, or in the coffin if there is one, and at the burial some member of the family says some such formula as "Never more return into thy mother's womb till this metal becomes soft as down."

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If a married woman dies before bearing a child (alôn hnin the-thi), a Cæsarean operation is performed, and the alôn is buried in some secret place. The reason alleged for this is, that were it not done, the husband in future existences would marry this woman again, and she would die in the same way. Were the embryo not secretly buried it would be disinterred by hmaw-sayās, necromancers, and wizards, who would make evil uses of it. Children's cauls are as highly thought of by Burmans as they are by English

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Those born on Saturday have T, Ht, D, Dh, and N. The aspirated and unaspirated letters have to most Englishmen precisely the same sound, though a practised ear detects the difference immediately. Examples are:—Maung Ba Tu, Mr. Like His Father; Ma Ne Htun, Miss or Mrs. Sunshine; Maung Du Wun, Mr. Pole Star; Mi Nu, Miss Tender.

Those born on Thursday select from P, Hp, B, Hb, and M. For example:—U Po Mya, Old Grandfather Emerald; Maung Bo Gale, Mr. Little Officer; Ma Hmwe, Miss or Mrs. Fragrant; Mi Meit, Miss Affection.

Wednesday has L and W. Examples:—Maung Ho, Mr. Yonder; Ma Waing Hla, Miss or Mrs. All-Round Pretty; Ma Hein, Miss or Mrs. Growler.

From noon till midnight on Wednesday is represented as a special day, or, at any rate, under a special constellation called Yahu, and those born between those hours have the alternative of the two Y's, one of which is sounded R in Pali and by the Arakanese. Examples are:—Maung Yo, Mr. Honesty; Ma Yôn, Miss or Mrs. Rabbit, U Yauk, Old Individual. [194] [184]

Friday has Th and H. Examples:—Maung Than, Mr. Million; Maung Thet She, Mr. Long Life; Ma Thin, Miss or Mrs. Learned; Mè Thaw, (old) Mrs. Noisy.

A is the only letter assigned to Sunday, but the combination with it of the symbol of any other vowel changes it to the sound of that vowel. For example:—Maung Ôn, Mr. Cocoa-nut; Maung At Ni, Mr. Red Needle; Ma E, Miss Cold; Ma Eing Saung, Mrs. Housekeeper; U O, Old Pot.

A common popular belief is, that, according to the day of the week (or rather the constellation representing that day) on which a man is born, so will his character be. Thus a man's name discloses his probable characteristics to the superstitious. 828 551 787

A man born on Monday will be jealous; on Tuesday, honest; on Wednesday, short-tempered, but soon calm again, the characteristic being intensified under Yahu; on Thursday, mild; on Friday, talkative; on Saturday, hot-tempered and quarrelsome; on Sunday, parsimonious.

Not only has every day its special character and its fixed

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792 553 775 561 In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops his secular name and receives a bwè, an honorific title, to mark that it is now open to him to escape from suffering. The name lapses when he returns to the world again, but it is sufficient that he has once borne it. He may now add to his kan, merit, and gain for himself a glorious new life by good works.

[198] This is what is meant by calling the ceremony a baptism. The bwè are almost invariably Pali, or Burmanised Pali names, and follow the same rules with regard to initial letters as the lu nāmé. Thus a Maung Po Myat, born on Thursday, might take the name of Pyinya-Zawta, while the bwè of a Sunday child, Maung An, would be Adesa. This religious or Buddhist (on the analogy of Christian) name is, of course, retained by the regular members of the monastery, and a monk is never addressed by any other when a name is used at all. When he becomes old a U is added, as U Adesa, but it must not be forgotten that [576] the use of a person's name in addressing him is considered very far from being polite in Burma, especially to one of rank and dignity such as a mendicant. On the other hand, one who has returned to the world never uses the bwè, not even when he accomplishes some great religious work such as the foundation of a pagoda, which according to a comforting belief ensures passage to Ne'ban after death.

The entry into the monastic order is therefore certainly the most important event in the life of a Burman, since only under the robe of the recluse and in the abandonment of the world can he completely fulfil the law and hope to find the way to eventual deliverance from the misery of ever-recurring existences. [796] The popular time for the ceremony is just at the beginning of Wā, the Buddhist Lent, which lasts from July to October, roughly speaking. Strict Buddhists make their sons stay throughout the whole Wā. During that season feasts, though they do occur, are very much discountenanced, and dramatic performances are energetically denounced by the religious.

792 561 184 177-84 According to the letter of the law the intending probationers should have reached the age of fifteen, but this regulation has almost entirely lapsed in Lower Burma, among other reasons chiefly because that is just the most

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important age for the boy to be learning English and arithmetic, with a view to getting situations under Government or in English merchants' offices. Therefore in the vast majority of cases shin-pyu thi takes place at the age of twelve, or perhaps even a year earlier.

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If the boy has been a scholar in the monastery beforehand, he is sure to be already prepared in all that is required of him. If not, he gets a few hasty lessons in the duties that will be incumbent on him. He must address a full [516] member of the order in such and such language; he must walk decorously through the streets, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground six feet before him, and on no account gaze round him, no matter what exciting events may be going on; he must wear his thingan and du-gut in the [292] prescribed fashion; he must eat with dignity and circumspection, and so on. All these details are set forth in most minute fashion in a code. When he has mastered the most essential portions, and has also given proof of an acquaintance with the ordinary forms of worship, all is ready. His

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horoscope now comes into requisition, and a bedinsayā or Ponna is called in to determine a lucky day and hour from the sadā. When this has been settled, three or four girls, the intending koyin-gale's sisters, or friends of the family, dress themselves up in their finest silks and jewels— [292] often borrowing a large quantity of the latter—and go round the town, announcing to all relatives, friends, and neighbours when the induction will take place, and inviting them to the feast, presenting the little packet of le'-pet usual on such occasions. Almost all of these send some little present, either of money or victuals, to aid in the feast and make it as grand as possible. Not unseldom, if somebody else's son is also going to enter the kyaung and the town is not very large, the two join forces, while occasionally as many as half a dozen unite, especially if the families are not well off.

On the appointed day the young neophyte dresses in [292] his finest clothes, and loads himself with all the family gold chains and jewellery, and as much more as he can borrow for the occasion. He then mounts a pony or gets into a richly decorated car. Shaded by gold umbrellas, allowed formerly on this occasion only in Upper Burma, except to those who [554] had got a special patent for them from the sovereign...

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kyaungs has led to very imperfect and limited knowledge of these treasuries of sacred knowledge. Formerly it used to be said that the man who did not know the Thadda, the Pali "grammar," knew nothing. If this position were insisted on now, the number of ignorant people in Lower Burma would be somewhat startling.

But there are many difficulties before you get to the Abidhamma and its cognate subjects. Even in the Payeit Gyi there is a section called Ta-zet, or Ta-zet-thut, which has the credit of sending many a probationer back to the noisy, sinful world. According to the couplet—

Shin pyet ta-zet,
Loo pyet a-yet.

Brandy sends a man to hell;
Ta-zet spoils the saint as well.

It is a sort of religious *Pons Asinorum.*

Besides prosecuting his religious studies, the shin is required also to attend on the pon-gyis and minister to their wants. He must lay before them at fixed times their daily food, the proper supply of water, the well-used betel-box, and whatever else the monk may require. He must of course go round every morning with the other members of the monastery, the begging-bowl strapped round his neck, accepting meekly, without word of thanks, or glance thrown to the right or left, even when he passes his father's house, the food poured in by the pious. When a pon-gyi goes abroad the neophyte may be required to follow, carrying his fan or umbrella, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf books, if a function is to be performed anywhere. According to the strict letter of the law the ko-yin ought to eat only of the food presented in the morning, but a very great laxity has crept in in this respect, not only with the neophytes, but even among the professed members of the order. It is no uncommon thing for the parents of the youth to send in daily a special meal for him, or even, in the case of wealthy families, actually to keep a cook on the monastic premises to prepare his food. Such sybaritism is not by any means uncommon in Lower Burma, though even there hardly approved of. In any good monastery in Upper Burma, or

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a monk is liable to commit. The ninth refers to the common Oriental dislike to any person of insufficient dignity occupying an elevated place physically above worthier people.

So far, then, the shin is not very grievously burdened in the monastery. But the discipline maintained is very strict. None of the ko-yins or of the boarder-pupils must be out of the monastic limits after the bell has rung. A lay scholar may get permission from the kyaung po-go to sleep at home now and again, but this indulgence is naturally impossible to the neophyte; he must always stay in the monastery. Again, the boarders may run home in the afternoon to get some dinner at their parents' houses, but this the shin cannot do. Breaches of the rules are very severely punished. The culprit's hands are tied high above his head to a post, and the castigator lays on vigorously on the naked back with a stout bamboo. Cases of deliberate cruelty of course occasionally happen, for human nature is the same everywhere, and a Dotheboys Hall is not an entire figment; but they are rare, and on the whole the shin is happy in the monastery, and occasionally in later life looks back with regret to the old, quiet, unruffled, careless life of the pon-gyi kyaung.

In Upper Burma it has actually been his school, for but very few adopt the system of having private teachers to instruct their children; and in Lower Burma it probably contrasts favourably with the uncomfortable hard benches and desks of the English institution, and the still more irksome quietness demanded, and steady, prolonged application exacted by the English teacher. Those who have been to both remember most fondly the long dusky monastery schoolroom, where they sat on the floor and shouted out their lessons, and now and again slipped out into the air to take the stiffness out of their limbs with a quarter of an hour at chin lôn, Burmese football. In the English school you learned to make money; in the Burmese school you learned to be happy and contented.

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entirely dispensed with. If the parents of both houses are agreeable, the contracting parties get married with most ardent lover-like rapidity. The age, too, has become very much younger. Most lads get married when they are eighteen or nineteen; thirteen or fourteen is a common age for the girls. Runaway marriages are common enough, and though the parents may be angry, they are usually too easy-going and indolent to take any energetic action in the matter, and let the couple find out their mistake and come and ask for pardon and a house to live in, which is seldom refused. Occasionally in Lower Burma a stern father demands that they shall be separated until the lad has got a situation for himself, but this is ordinarily little more than a mere form of speech. In Upper Burma, where food is scarce and working hands more valuable, the husband is brought to the girl's parents' house and made to do his share towards supporting the household.

The preliminary courting is naturally conducted in the old fashion, best known to those who have had experience of their own in such matters. The parties meet at pwès, the girl perhaps selling cheroots, fried garlic, le'pet, and what not, and therefore being readily accessible to any swain. It must not be supposed that keeping a stall is regarded as anything derogatory. Numbers of perfectly well-to-do women set them up regularly; some even have daily work in the bazaars, and very often a girl commences occupations of the kind with the view of attracting the young men and securing a husband. Then there are meetings at pagoda feasts, in the zayats and at friends' houses, so that there are plenty of chances of introduction to eligible swains, even without calling in the assistance of the aungthwè. This functionary makes it a regular occupation to know all the attractions, physical and sordid, of all the young women in the place, and for a small consideration, or sometimes merely for love of his trade, brings young couples together and arranges places of meeting for them. He is, of course, most useful where an impecunious youth aspires to the hand of a rich merchant's or high official's daughter. He manages an introduction in a roundabout way to avoid rousing suspicions, praises his client's appearance and

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down the river in the big rice-boat to one of the great milling towns. And so an uneventful life passes away: the greatest ambition to see the village boat successful at the Thadingyut races, and the village champion cock or buffalo triumphant over all others; the greatest desire to live peaceably with all men and observe the Ten Precepts; the greatest excitement the occasional visit of the English district officer, or the suspicion of a witch in that lonely house down by the spirit's pool on the creek. In Upper Burma formerly this quiet was more apt to be disturbed by the summoning of levies to serve in some special raid against audacious dacoits, or to make a demonstration against reiving mountaineers. If the myo-wun was a pious man, calls for enforced labour at digging tanks, building pagodas and monasteries, rest-houses and tazaungs, were likely to keep the villager a great deal more occupied than he cared for. There can be no doubt in any patriotic Burman's mind that the state of the people, regularly taxed though they be, under British rule, is infinitely happier than it was under their king, and all but the officials and their hangers-on longed for the day when the English flag was to float over all the land as far as Mogaung. There could be no hope for the country, where, even under a kindly king like Mindôn, ill-conditioned governors oppressed the populace with absolute impunity. Complaints were made, but his majesty could not venture to leave his palace for any great distance to inquire for himself, and gold easily dulled the senses of the highest minister round the golden throne. It is little wonder then that the people, kept perpetually in the lowest depths of poverty, were, if not actually dying out, certainly not increasing in numbers. There was nothing which so much indicated the popular feeling, and at the same time so irritated the Burmese Government, as the unceasing stream of emigrants to Lower Burma.

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Nevertheless, even in Independent territory the Burman preserved his light heart and buoyant disposition. No calamity is so overwhelming as to make him despond. Some years ago a large fire occurred in Mandalay, and spread with such terrible rapidity that the inhabitants of a whole quarter were unable to save anything but the clothes they

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balls of opium. These vagaries are, however, frequently winked at, for a copyist who can write neatly and with accuracy is far from being common.

The Thiho Taik library is a model in its way. It is nearly the best monastic collection in Mandalay, and is certainly far better arranged than any other. The sadaiks, or manuscript boxes, are arranged in three rows, one over the other; the thôts and zăts—the sermons and birth-stories—of the Lord Buddha below; above them the Cinghalese commentaries and exegeses; and on the top shelf Burmese translations and the explanations of various learned sadaws. Each chest contains a large number of different books, every separate collection of leaves being enclosed between wooden boards, some plain, some carved in high relief, with figures of dêwas and demons. Round this is wrapped a kabalwè, a square piece of cloth with inwoven scenes from the sacred books, or portions of the Law, and the formulæ used at the pagoda. Most of these are of silk, very often with narrow slips of bamboo worked in so as to give stiffness to the whole. Instead of this, or sometimes in addition, is used the să-si-gyo, a riband, about two fingers' breadth, and upwards of a yard in length. This is knitted or crocheted in a peculiarly close fashion, which puzzles English ladies. On it is worked the name of the owner, his titles and distinctions, and whatever other aspirations he chooses to add. They are very neat, and quite easy to read, an advantage which does not always characterise Berlin wool work. The king's grants of forest land, monopolies, and the like, were usually executed in this way.

All the boxes are kept carefully locked, and the door is barred at night, for such a library represents years of labour, and could only with the greatest difficulty be replaced. It is only in Mandalay that libraries of any value are to be found. In Lower Burma the majority of the kyaungs do not even possess a complete copy of the three parts of the Bitaghat, the Buddhist Bible, and some few have nothing beyond a copy of the Kammawāsā, and perhaps a Mafla Lingaya Wutta, a life of the Lord Buddha, or something of the kind. Many others have, no doubt, valuable collections, but the monks are ignorant, they cannot read the books

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at the top of the hti is the seinbu, the diamond-bud, which in not a few poor districts is represented by a soda-water bottle, which combines the resemblance to a flower-bud with the good offices of a lightning conductor. The hnget-pyaw-bu is usually surrounded with lavish adornment of the sacred lotus. The payās that rise up into a plain cone or spire are therefore the nearest to the original tumulus. the top being simply drawn out into a conical point. On the other hand, the bell-like pagodas are only a direct imitation of the lotus-bud, and this has led to the more rounded dome-like forms, sometimes called thabeit hmauk, the inverted begging-pot. This term, however, is applied to the swelling-out round part on every pagoda, and has thence been borrowed to designate special shrines. It has nothing to do with phallic worship as some have imagined, nor is there any idea of the resemblance to a human skull. Such grim reminders of mortality common in Thibetan Buddhism do not commend themselves to the Burman.

The buildings are all made of crumbling, sun-dried brick, for it is enough to gratify the pious feeling of the moment, and even the long years that the most solidly built stone edifices might last would only be as an evanescent drop in the stream of eternity. Thus the Burman sees no harm in building pagodas of sand, or even cloth and pasteboard, and in the national annals the victory which false shrines won over more substantial erections is a favourite theme. In Lower Burma, the payās are mostly of the simplest pattern, derived from the archetypal rice-heap and the lotus-bud. They are solid pyramidal cones, rising with a gradually diminishing rounded outline, and surmounted by a hti, or "umbrella" spire, a construction resembling the musical instrument called a *chapeau chinois*, formed of concentric rings, lessening to a rod with a small vane called hnget-ma-nā on the top. They are almost without exception erected on more or less elevated platforms. Burma is quite different from other Buddhist countries, where the relics are exhibited on great feast days. The payā is perfectly solid with the exception of the tāpana taik, situated directly under the spire and the hti, and

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there is no means of entering this to view the sacred relics. The addition of spires and the elaboration of the central pyramid are later thoughts, and give hints of the great architectural efforts to be seen in Upper Burma. The peaks of Mount Myinmo are said to have furnished the first notion. In some cases, as at the Shwe San-daw of Prome, the central spire is surrounded at its base by a circle of small gilded temples or zediyan, forming a continuous wall round the pagoda, each containing an image of the Buddha, and suggesting the idea of the Setyawala hills round the world-girding Thamôddaya sea. In almost all the larger payās there are arched wings on each face of the lower platform, serving, as it were, as ante-chapels, and each containing a large Gautama. It is obvious how easily the introduction of these niche chapels led to the halls and aisles of the Pagān temples. Still this elaboration remains only a sign of architectural genius, and not of greater sanctity, for in every case the building itself serves only as a meet place for meditation and praise in thought or words. The great temples of Pagān, with their galleries, transepts, and corridors, have more of the character of churches in the ordinary acceptation of the word, and the Ananda above all, with its echoing vaults and dim religious light, reminds one especially of some great cathedral of the Middle Ages. But the outward magnificence of the Pagān temples does not win for them the reverence which is shown to vastly plainer bell pagodas.

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Of all the shrines, the Shwe Dagôn Payā, the great pagoda of Rangoon and the most venerable place of worship in all the Indo-Chinese countries, is the finest and the most universally visited. Its peculiar sanctity is due to the fact that it is the only payā, known to Buddhists, which contains actual relics, not only of Shin Gautama, but of the three Budhs who preceded him in this world. In the tāpana taik of the pagoda, along with eight hairs from the head of the Buddha, in the eleventh andrakap of whose cycle we are now living, there exist the ye-thauk-palā, the drinking-cup of Kaukkathan; the tLengan or robe of Gawnagông; and the taungwe or staff of Kathapa. Little wonder then that the glittering gold spire on the last spur of the

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Down the river there are hundreds of others of every variety and degree of decoration. There is the Naga Yôn Payā, the whole building wrought into the form of a dragon; the huge round-domed Kaung-hmu-daw, and the "king's victory pagoda" at Sagaing, the "golden cock-scratching," on the other side, commemorating a favourite legend of the boundless charity of the Budh. There are glistening white pinnacles, or flashing gold spires, far up the Sagaing hills, with thousands of steps wending wearily up over the steep, rough hill-side, and gazing up to them from the Amarapoora side are great massy temples, frowning over the river with all the stern solidity of a knightly hold. Each has its legend, some tale of bloodshed or piety, some event in Burmese history, or birth-story of the Buddha.

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Most renowned, however, for its pagodas is Pagān, in many respects the most remarkable religious city in the world. Jerusalem, Rome, Kieff, Benares, none of them can boast the multitude of temples, and the lavishness of design and ornament that make marvellous the deserted capital on the Irrawaddy. Deserted it practically is, for the few flimsy huts that stand by the river are inhabited only by pagoda slaves and men condemned to perpetual beggary. For eight miles along the river-bank and extending to a depth of two miles inland, the whole space is thickly studded with pagodas of all sizes and shapes, and the very ground is so thickly covered with crumbling remnants of vanished shrines, that according to the popular saying you cannot move foot or hand without touching a sacred thing. Some of the zedis are all but perfect. Restored by the pious, they stand out glistening snow-white, only to render more striking the hoary, weather-beaten ruins of their less-cared-for neighbours. Here the bell-shaped, solid pyramid of Lower Burma is rarely seen. The religious structures fully merit the word temple as understood in ordinary language. To quote Yule, who gives a detailed account of the principal shrines in his *Mission to Ava*, there are all kinds: "The bell-shaped pyramid of dead brickwork in all its varieties; the same raised over a square or octagonal cell, containing an image of the Buddha; the bluff, knob-like dome of the Ceylon Dagobats, with the square cap which seems to have characterised

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it is perpetuated by a curious notion that though a man may present all three kinds of images, he must do so in a special order: the standing first, then the sitting, and last the lying down. As many as one pleases of one style may be presented, but you must not reverse the order: one dare not go backwards. The vast majority of images represent the master in a cross-legged attitude, in which he attained the Buddhaship, seated under the bawdi tree. This sitting figure is called Tinmyinkwé. The left hand lies palm upwards in the lap; the right hangs over the knee. The ears reach to the shoulder, and the face is calm and passionless. On the top of the head is a little knob or point. This is called the mani-daw, and represents the hair which Prince Theiddat cut off with his sword when he first put on the yellow robe. It was left a quarter of an inch long, and never grew again. In attaining to the supreme wisdom, the Prince attained to the Ne'ban, or annihilation of the passions. 178

Less common are the Shinbinthalyaung, the recumbent figures representing the Budh as he died and attained to the Ne'ban of earthly existence, reclining between the two sāl-trees. He lies on his right side, and is often represented with numbers of his lamenting disciples ranged around the couch. To these are not uncommonly added circles of the kings of the earth and the heavens, bilus, galôns, nats, yek-kathas, and a variety of other creatures. The figures of the latter often display some artistic skill in the modelling and the expression of the features, which it is impossible to show in the placid countenance of the teacher himself. The Shin-binthalyaung very often have the emblems of the Shwe-zet-daw carved on the soles of the feet.

Finally there is the Mat-tat-kodaw, or erect image, also called Mat-yat-daw, where the master is represented in the attitude of preaching, the right hand elevated, but still with the same calm, unmoved visage. These Mat-yat-daw are usually very large, and are far more common in the temples of Upper Burma than in the bell-pagodas of the low country. They are often Sapupati Payā, representing the Budh as a king with crown on head and the royal wings on arms and thighs. They are usually very large, like the recumbent figure. The standing figures in the Ananda at Pagān must [184]

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778 be over forty feet in height, and form a very impressive sight. Light sufficient to illuminate the whole figure cannot be admitted at the comparatively low gateways of the shrine. Cunning architects have therefore cut slits far up in the chapel roof, and a narrow stream of light falls full on the gilded face of the Buddha. The effect is most solemn and awe-inspiring. The devotee passes through long dim corridors, where his foot falls soft on the mouldy pavement, and the smell is as of a charnel-house, and there is silence throughout the whole vast temple, broken fitfully by the eerie chant of a fellow-worshipper far away through the passages, and suddenly he comes on the chapel and sees before him the sad tranquil face, with a glory shed over it, and the hand stretched out as if in warning or benediction. One can then understand how it is that many of the ignorant and uninstructed do actually worship the Gautama as if it were an idol, and the Englishman involuntarily takes off his hat as he enters the sanctuary.

778 184 The statues in the great lonely fanes at Pagān are certainly far more impressive than those in the smaller but more gaily-decked-out niche-shrines of the solid pyramidal pagodas of Lower Burma. The four great Mat-yat-daw in the Ananda Payā represent the four great Buddhas of this world-cycle. Kauk-kathan, as the first law-giver, is placed in the east; Gawnagông in the southern image chamber; Kathapa to the west, and the Buddha of the present religious period in the northern shrine. Kauk-kathan is made of the sweet-scented dantagu tree; Gawnagông of jasmine wood; Kathapa of brass, and Gautama of fir; but they have all been covered with plaster and gilt, and the material of which they are made is only known by tradition. An especially favourite figure to represent standing is Dibinkāya Payā, the fourth of the twenty-eight Buddhas whose names are recorded as appearing in successively destroyed worlds. It was this Buddha, the "Light-bringer," who first announced to Shin Gautama that he, then a fervent yahan, would hereafter, after many worlds, attain the supreme wisdom.

The temples of Pagān and other places in the upper territory are built specially for the reception of great images, and as the public zeal is concentrated on these, there are

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comparatively few surplus figures, and these mostly scattered along the sides of the dim corridors. In Lower Burma, however, where the sacred buildings are more particularly relic shrines, the images are more of an adjunct to the payā, and there is a most extraordinary multiplication of them. In each of the four image chambers round the base of the pagoda, besides the chief figure there are numbers of other Buddhas of all sizes, and these overflow into dozens of tazaungs, or image houses, all round about the central payā. This reserve stock is due to the unceasing desire for kutho. If a man cannot build a pagoda, or has not money enough to erect a monastery or a rest-house, there is at any rate no one so poor but he can gain merit by dedicating a Gautama; and so images of brass and marble, plaster and wood, and sun-dried clay, flow in a never-ending stream to the great district shrines. There has long ceased to be any room for them except in the image-houses, and there they remain, seldom visited by any but the very religious, and gradually becoming grimed and mouldy with age, notwithstanding the Yéthonpwè, at the new year, when the women come and wash them down. It is a maxim that devotions may and ought to be repeated before every image, but it is not often that a worshipper is seen in the tazaungs, and the offerings of candles and incense sticks, flowers and pauk-pauk san-pan (pop-corn), are few and far between. Nevertheless the houses are crammed with figures of all sizes, from huge ten feet high Sagaing marbles down to little clay painted and gilt specimens that you can put in your pocket, and that idolatry-detesting Britishers often do so serve and afterwards exhibit as having actually "been worshipped." Big and small, they are crowded together as close as they can be, the small ones reposing in the hand or the lap, or round about the sides of their bigger facsimiles. Sometimes, as is the case in a great long building at the Kyaik-than-lan Payā at Maulmein, the centre is occupied by a gigantic recumbent figure, the tinmyinkwe being placed in orderly array all round the sides facing the central dying Budh. Sometimes the figures stand side by side on steps rising one above the other with a small open space in the middle. The halls are always quite full, the most recently

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XXII

NATS AND SPIRIT-WORSHIP

NOTWITHSTANDING that Buddhism has been the established religion in Burma since shortly after the third great council at Patalipootra in 241 B.C. (283 of the sacred era), and that the purest form of the faith exists, and is firmly believed in, yet, throughout the whole Ashe Pyi (the Eastern country), both in Upper and Lower Burma, the old geniolatry still retains a firm hold on the minds of the people. Missionaries say that it is a natural revolting of the human mind against the denial of the existence of a Supreme Being, superior to man, and controlling his destiny. Government officers assert that the retention of the prior religion (for it is undoubtedly a kind of second religion) is due to the fact that surrounding, and scattered about amongst the Buddhist Burmans, are numerous tribes—Karens, Kachins, and others—who have no form of belief but nat-worship, the reverencing of the spirits of nature. As a simple matter of fact, it is undeniable that the propitiating of the nats is a question of daily concern to the lower class Burman, while the worship at the pagoda is only thought of once a week. For the nat may prove destructive and hostile at any time, whereas the acquisition of kutho at the pagoda is a thing which may be set about in a business-like way, and at proper and convenient seasons. It is just the difference between avoiding a motor car and avoiding the circular saw in a timber mill.

Before proceeding further, it will be well to discuss the word "nat" itself. General Phayre and Bishop Bigandet did not finally settle whether Nat is derived from the Sanskrit term nath, meaning "master, husband, lord," or not. The

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Hill Peoples) AP1
Burmese AP4

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belief, do not regard them otherwise than as malevolent beings who must be looked up to with fear, and propitiated by regular offerings. They do not want to have anything to do with the nats; all they seek is to be let alone. The bamboo pipes of spirit, the bones of sacrificial animals, the hatchets, swords, spears, bows and arrows that line the way to a Kachin village, are placed there not with the idea of attracting the spirits, but of preventing them from coming right among the houses in search of their requirements. If they want to drink, the rice spirit has been poured out, and the bamboo stoup is there in evidence of the libation; the blood-stained skulls of oxen, pigs, and the feathers of fowls show that there has been no stint of meat-offerings; should the nats wax quarrelsome, and wish to fight, there are the axes and dahs with which to commence the fray. Only let them be grateful, and leave their trembling worshippers in peace and quietness. For the Karen all nature is filled with nats, every tree and stone and pool and breath of air has its spirit. The dead are only separated from the living by a thin white veil, through which, however, none but the gifted can see and venture to speak to them in words. So the Caffres leave an open space in their line of battle that there may be room for the spirits of dead heroes to join in the conflict and fight on their behalf.

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The Burmans are naturally not so wholesale nor so demonstrative in their recognition of the existence of spirits. The yahans would not endure it, and Buddhism has at any rate a somewhat softening and reassuring power. Nevertheless evidences of the fact of the belief are universal and not to be mistaken, in all parts of the country, whether among the Government school educated youth, or among the bumpkins, who follow the plough, and crush the clods, and know the jungle better than anything else upon earth. At the extremity of every village, the Ywasôn, there is a nat-sin, a shrine for the nat or nats of the neighbourhood. This varies very much in size and character. Sometimes it is a mere bamboo cage, hung in a pipul or other tree, or slung on a post, a bird-cage kind of construction, with an image inside, and a little hole through which the superstitious can introduce their offerings, tiny water-pots, oil-lamps,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XXIII

RICE CULTIVATION

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A GROWING number of millions of acres are under cultivation in Lower Burma, and of this total all but some three hundred thousand acres are devoted to the planting of rice. Tobacco, sugar-cane, cotton, and oil-seeds of different kinds, as well as fruit-trees, form the other crops. Upper Burma has a greater number of crops, and the proportion of rice is far from being so overwhelming, though almost everywhere it is the chief crop. The alluvial lands of the Irrawaddy delta produce by far the greatest quantity of rice. It is certain that the best quality grain comes at present from this part of the country, but this may be due to more practised agricultural skill or long-continued tilling of the land. Hardly any possible number of crops in a season could apparently exhaust the fertility of the soil. Any part of the country, however, may be used for the cultivation of rice. The laziest farm is a swamp-land, where the ordinary rainfall is sufficient to produce the sodden ground requisite for a rice crop. Such low-lying plains and the riparian lands, annually flooded by the overflow of the river, are naturally best suited to Burmese indolence and are earliest taken up. Farther up the country, where the rain runs off the surface quickly and the land is too high for the south-west monsoon floods, it is necessary to resort to irrigation, either by the obvious method of dams or by ingenious water-wheels. Finally, there is the laborious taung-ya cultivation, where whole hillsides are cleared of trees to produce a crop. This hard work is left to mild aboriginal or other tribes, whom the Burman has long ago bullied out of the fat lowlands.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

tribute must be as gratifying as the loudest stamping of feet and whistling on fingers of a London theatre. In fact a Burman might perhaps be justified in doubting the enthusiasm and admiration which finds vent in whistling.

The acting as a whole cannot be said to be satisfactory. The circumstances are against it. Who could "lose himself in his part" in the centre of a crowd of people all smoking and often talking? Moreover the subjects treated are so romantic and remote from ordinary worldly events that no one can be expected to realise them. Finally, who could keep it up for ten hours at a stretch? Nevertheless, individual passages are occasionally wonderfully well done. The piteous wailings and desolation of the princess; the majesty of the king; the grim savagery of the demon, are often very effectively delineated, while the clowns are almost invariably exceedingly clever. They are chosen for their ready wit, many of the jokes being extempore, as well as for their power of facial contortion. Caricatures of the performances of the other actors and comic songs form their chief stock-in-trade, and the text of the play is very far from being adhered to. It is an undoubted fact, if scarcely complimentary, that the clown has much more to do in the play and is very much broader in his jokes when Englishmen are present than when there is a purely national audience. The prolongation of the comic parts is due to a courteous desire to please the visitors, buffooneries being much more readily understood than high dramatic art, while the coarseness is unfortunately due to the same impression which makes a Burman always produce brandy and beer for the refreshment of a white man, the idea namely that that is what he likes best. None of the higher class troupes, more especially those from Upper Burma, will, however, condescend to this sort of thing.

The company formerly was always made up in Mandalay, or said it was. There are other troupes, but it is usually taken for granted that they cannot be better than second-rate. The delta Burman is firmly persuaded that "far birds have fair feathers." In their humble phraseology they say, "In the Low Country we are not up in the humanities." This is not exactly complimentary to longer

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

English rule and civilisation, but in one sense it is true. In Upper Burma every one is taught in the monasteries, and having no other relief from Pali doxologies, becomes saturated with the phraseology and ideas of the zāts. Thus, from the theatrical point of view, the Mandalay youth starts with a distinct advantage over the Lower Burman who potters away in lay and elementary Government schools over addition and multiplication and the sterilities of the First Reader. To qualify for the first ranks, therefore, the ambitious Peguer starts for the Royal City of Gems, practises as much as he can there, and watches the most celebrated players. Then, after a time, he obtains an engagement, and turns up in Rangoon as a quasi anya tha. The stage managers, usually old actors who have made some money and are inclined to take their ease, go up to Mandalay during the rains, when comparatively little is doing, the wet, combined with the four months of Lent, making pwès few and far between. There they cast about and get together a company, entering into a written engagement with the actors, male and female, for the season, which lasts about seven months, from Ta'saungmôn to Nayôn (roughly, November to May). The manager makes all arrangements, and usually takes up his headquarters in some town or large village whence he can easily move to the surrounding places where the company may be wanted. The salaries paid are very good. A first-class prince or princess commands from 800 to 1000 rupees for the season. A good lubyet, or jester, will get five or six hundred. After these come the actors who take such parts as the king or the maids of honour. The dancers, that is to say, those who simply dance and do no more, get about sixty rupees; the saingthama, the musicians, receive forty. The company have not more than two or three rehearsals together before they commence their tour, but this does not matter much, because every one knows his part well, and the cue is not a matter of supreme importance. The zat-ôk (the manager) draws all the money from the performances. As much as 450 rupees have been paid for a two-night performance. This, however, was exceptional, and it was a marionette play with the great Maung Tha Byaw in the prince's part. Very few people

R:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

in the river Neritzara, at a place where more than 100,000 Buddhas had bathed, before obtaining the supreme intelligence. Then he divided the nogana into forty-nine mouthfuls, ate it, and mounted the throne, whereon he sat for forty-nine days tasting no food, and combating Mān Nat, the spirit of death and sin. But ere he lapsed into meditation he threw his golden bowl into the river. It ascended the stream swiftly, floated steadily for a short time, and then sank in a whirlpool far down, leagues beyond the earth into the country of the nagās, where it fell against the golden bowls of the three previous Budhs with a clang that resounded throughout the four worlds, and all things worshipped the present Lord:

> King and high Conqueror! thine hour is come.
> This is the night the ages waited for.

This event in the life of Shin Gautama is commemorated in the Sôndawgyi pwè. Sōnthi is a sacred word set apart to denote the eating of members of the Holy Assembly, and, in remembrance of Thuzata's historic offering, the mendicants are feasted annually by the pious, with a splendour and profusion far exceeding the ordinary alms poured daily with unstinting hand into the begging-bowl. The date of the feast does not exactly correspond with the original event. According to the chronicle, the Lord Buddha attained the first state of ne'ban in the month of Kasôn, about April, whereas the feast of Tawadeintha, with which the Sôndawgyi is always immediately connected, is celebrated after Lent, at the full moon of Ta'saung-môn in November. The festival is essentially one of the town rather than of the country. Except the New Year's Feast, none of the religious celebrations can be really called universal, and the Sôndawgyi perhaps least of all. Villages and small country towns cannot get together the splendour necessary to distinguish the occasion from the ordinary domestic feasts, or even from the daily almsgiving to the mendicants. It is therefore in a large town like Rangoon, where there is a certain amount of money, and a facility for acquiring or borrowing ornaments and frippery, that the festivities are best seen. There the *fête*—the word is more appropriate

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XXXV

THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST

ALTHOUGH religious festivals and *fêtes* are so abundant in Burma, it is undoubtedly true that none of them are universally observed in all parts of the country, except the New Year's Feast. In localities where the people are exceptionally pious, the end of Lent may be more carefully observed than elsewhere, some devoting themselves especially to pious observances, others to the more worldly ceremonies of the sôndawgyi feast. The Tawadeintha festival is an annual observance in some districts, in others it practically passes over unnoticed. Similarly with all the minor *fêtes*. But it is not so with the thi'gyan pwè. All over Burma, from the smallest jungle hamlet to the crowded streets of Rangoon and the straggling suburbs of Mandalay, the New Year is ushered in with the old formalities, and with perennial enthusiasm. Not an hour is cut off from the allotted number of days, and every item of the old practice is carried out with the same vigour.

For this reason the "Water Feast," as it is called by Englishmen, has forced itself on the attention of the most careless observer, and every one who has written about Burma devotes a greater or less amount of space to a description of the good-humoured merriment with which the New Year is introduced. I do not propose, therefore, to do more than allude to the lesser known formalities observed on the occasion.

The month Tagoo, the first of the Burman year, occurs in the spring, and New Year's Day is in the earlier half of April. But it does not fall annually on the same day. It

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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the great rivers again. The surest way of putting an end to "roping" and false rowing with the object of mere money gain, is to reintroduce the old honest, enthusiastic rivalry. Where every rower feels that the name of his village depends upon the prowess of his arm, there will be no "sugaring" and ignobly waiting, in Sheffield handicap fashion, to "have their heads loose."

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All the races in the low country are rowed in hlaw hle, or hlaw laung, that is to say, in paddle-boats. Up country there are frequently contests in hkap hle, "pull-away boats," rowed with oars, but even there the national paddle predominates. It may be mentioned that the coast men are by far the better rowers. In the Mandalay October races in 1881, a scratch Bassein boat challenged all comers, and was victorious in every match.

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There are a variety of boats, mostly, however, made on the same model, of which the launggo is the type. This is simply a canoe hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, the sides of which are drawn out by charring and inserting wedges; then the boat-builder chips out the centre. The laungsat is only a little larger and more commodious, plank sides being added to the solid keel, if it may be so called. The huge hnaw, or rice-boats, are made in the same fashion.

Of a different style are the pein-gaw, huge, ungainly, barge-like things, used principally at Yenangyaung for carrying oil. Along the sides, projecting over the beams of the boat, and reaching aft to the house raised on the quarter-deck, are tagin, a sort of platform for the polers to walk backwards and forwards on. Pihn-gaw keep mostly in shallow water, so that their ungainly weight may be moved along by poles, which is much quicker and less laborious work than rowing.

Barring exceptionally fine racing-boats, the hlawkadaw, or hlawga, the king's despatch boats, were the finest specimens of boat-building. They were gilt all over, even to the kat-tat, or paddles, and the stern rose high up in the air for the accommodation of the steerer. The express boats, or hpaungpaw, had usually a representation of the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu and national emblem of the Burmese, on the bows, and had often as many as sixty

[531]

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4
Upper Burma
Lower Burma

423 distinctions are more minute than is at all necessary or indeed
423 comprehensible. They include all children born out of wed-
848 lock, among whom are reckoned such as are born before the parents have been married ten months; all children that are
[597] purchased, or adopted by any other ceremony than that of abadita or keiktima; and such as "from respect or affection
423 style their guardians father or mother." The settlement of
184 boundary marks was one of the earliest duties of the first ruler. The thale rice became constantly scarcer and scarcer, and it was determined that it would be well to give every person his share and mark it off distinctly. The appointment of persons to execute this duty was the first occasion on which executive officials were found necessary. Manu enumerated twenty-five objects suitable for legal landmarks. These included all natural objects, such as lakes, rivers, ridges, and hills, remarkable large trees and clumps of bamboos; artificial boundaries of an equally permanent character, such as pagodas, shrines for demon-worship, zayats, or rest-houses, stone pillars and sacred posts, wells and cairns; finally such singular distinguishing marks as heads of cattle, chaff, ashes, charcoal, sand, broken earthenware vessels, and men's bones. "Beating the bounds," one would think, must have been very necessary with the younger members of the household in the case of such perishable boundary lines as could be constituted by chaff, or even sand. In Upper Burma the cultivating
[161] population was so sparse that no difficulty was found in the matter of boundaries. In Lower Burma farms are as distinctly marked off as land-surveyors' chains can effect the operation in pointing out the little raised ridges which separate the plots of paddy land from one another. Nevertheless they are hardly such as the South of England farmers would approve.

423 These allodial tenures are the only ones which exist in
[177-92] Burma now. In independent territory there were two other
651 kinds of holding, which were not, however, very numerous or
422 extensive. The first of these were called thugyisa fields, and consisted of certain tracts of land near the town or village set apart for the maintenance of the headman. As that official was anything but a permanency, the tenant for the time being very seldom cultivated them himself, but let them

563 within the past two or three decades. In almost every way, they form a
463 village within the village. They are spatially clustered together, apart from
●184 the Burmese. Their living is earned by dairying; milk from their cattle and
[262] water buffaloes is sold in Rangoon, for cash, to Muslim restaurants. Since the Burmese do not consume milk, the Indian dairymen find no market for their product in the community. The only economic relationship between the two groups consists of some exchange of Burmese paddy stalk, when the harvest is over, for animal manure. The Indians use the paddy stalk as fodder for their animals, while the Burmese use animal manure to some extent for their not very fertile garden and rice lands.

563 The Indians being Hindus, the Burmese Buddhists, the two groups have no
571 basis for common participation in religious or ceremonial life. Nor is there
556 more than a negligible tendency towards intermarriage; our census showed two cases.

As shown by our figures on income, the Indians as a group are far more prosperous than the Burmese. Although the Burmese seem to realize this, they tend to phrase the matter not so much in terms of greater wealth of the Indians as in terms of how little the Indian spends of his income. To the average Burmese of the village, the Indian is something of a lesser breed who lives on next to nothing and so grows rich.

563 Throughout the course of research in Tadagale, an effort was made from time to time to study intergroup feelings and attitudes, but this was a subject on which informants who were quite ready to discuss almost any other matter were loath to speak. The Burmese seemed to know little (or at least so professed) about the ways of the Indians; the Indians were very tight-lipped concerning the Burmese.

175 It was towards the close of our work in Tadagale that certain events
669 occurred which brought out, in sharp focus, the nature of Burmese-Indian relations
674 and attitudes, and completely broke the silence maintained earlier. At this point, however, some digression is necessary to provide a background for understanding what took place.

In 1949-50, the internal disturbances which have beset Burma since the end of World War II were at their height. During this time the maintenance of law and order sank to a very low point; robbery, armed and unarmed, was rampant. Tadagale was robbed three times within the preceding year, according to informants. On such occasions, bandits entered the village, fired their guns into the air to frighten the defenseless villagers, and then proceeded to tie up some villagers and remove their money and other valuables. Anyone who resisted was beaten. According to villagers, the police, located about half a mile away, could not be depended upon for protection or for action once a crime occurred, for the bandits were better organized and armed than the police, making the latter extremely reluctant to take any action.

674 Some early evidences of distrust between Indians and Burmese appeared
563 about the middle of our research period, when an Indian dairyman stated that he
175 was convinced that the bandits who periodically invaded Tadagale had Burmese collaborators in the village. He based his belief on the fact that the bandits seemed always to find their way directly to the homes of the more prosperous inhabitants, which knowledge, he claimed, could be gotten only from villagers.

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

IV

RELIGION

The people of Tadagale are overwhelmingly Theravada Buddhist in faith. The exceptions are the Indian minority, who are largely Hindus. There are three Indians who profess Mohammedanism, and three Indo-Burmans and one Pakistani of like faith. Being Burmese and Buddhist are almost identified in the thinking of the majority, as evidenced by the fact that almost all replied 'Burmese Buddhist' to the question, 'To what people do you consider yourself to belong?'

In discussing the religious life of Tadagale, realism calls for emphasis upon actual religious beliefs and behavior, rather than any extended setting down of the formal theology of Buddhism. The latter has been done in any number of specialized works, to which the interested reader may refer. Here we shall refer to Buddhist precepts insofar as is necessary to illuminate religious beliefs and practices of the villagers.

The Five Precepts or Commandments. Almost all villagers know well the fundamental Buddhist injunctions against the taking of life in any form, the consumption of alcohol, illicit sexual activity, theft, and prevarication. These moral rules are, of course, sometimes breached. In Tadagale, the use of alcohol, sometimes to excess, is perhaps the most notable instance. The 'good Buddhist' does not, however, seem to experience feelings of guilt or pangs of conscience in such matters. Rather, the following of the moral precepts has instrumental value for him, in relation to his accumulation of merit and his reincarnation after death.

Merit. One's behavior throughout life determines one's store of merit, and this, in turn, determines one's reincarnation after death. Morally proper behavior, such as the following of the five basic commandments of Buddhist faith, is regarded as contributing to one's store of merit and thus enhancing one's state of reincarnation after death. Religious acts, such as making daily offerings of food to the monks, saying prayers, and attending the pagoda festivals on the important sacred days are likewise considered to increase one's merit. Breaking the moral precepts, irreligiousity, acting selfish or quarrelsome, detract from merit and accordingly tend to lower one's state in reincarnation.

Such is about the extent of the average villager's lay conception and understanding of the moral code and the ideas of the afterlife in Buddhism. He has little or no knowledge of the detailed concepts of reincarnation, with its elaborate gradationary ladder leading from the four states of punishment up to the ultimate achievement of Nirvana. Such theological learning is the property of the monkhood and of a few laymen who spent more than the usual few years as pupils in the monastic school.

Functions of the Monks. The functions of the Buddhist monks in the village may be conveniently classified as three-fold: formal education; officiation at certain rites; and providing personal advice and guidance to individuals.

With respect to formal education, the monks of four monasteries close to the village conduct schools which are attended by a considerable number of

23: Benedict

●184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

ALL Southeast Asia
Burmese AP4

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER III

NIBBĀNA IN BURMESE BUDDHISM

1. A Positive Concept

It is still widely believed that the Buddha's teaching was fundamentally pessimistic, a philosophy of world and life negation culminating in a conception of Nibbāna as extinction or annihilation. It is also believed that while the Northern or Mahāyāna school developed more positive tendencies, picturing the goal as a Paradise of joy, the original pessimism is faithfully reflected and even emphasised in the southern, Hīnayāna school.

Thus Schweitzer concludes that the Buddha conceived deliverance from transmigration "as a complete cessation of life which is attained by direct renunciation of the will-to-live" and that Hīnayāna Buddhism continues this original doctrine.[1] Although he qualifies this conclusion by a preliminary distinction between 'thought' and 'religious belief,' and also by a passing reference to more recent interpretations of original Buddhism, he remains convinced that the Buddha's thinking was "dominated by world and life negation."[2]

But if the analysis of Burmese Buddhism presented in our two previous chapters is accepted, there would appear to be reason for challenging this generally accepted opinion, both in regard to the Buddha's original teaching and the Hīnayāna reflection of that teaching. For here in the heart of this southern school is a people who certainly manifest a very lively will to live, yet a people indoctrinated by the Hīnayāna faith. This faith, as it is found in Burma, cannot be summarily dismissed as world-denying. It has shaped and maintained a very definite civilisation. It expresses itself in a closely-knit community life. It is still vigorous.

In such a context, we should expect, not a negative, but a positive concept of Nibbāna.

It is the purpose of this present chapter to show that this expectation is realised. Not only among the laity, in the 'popular religion,' but among the monks, there is an essentially positive concept of Nibbāna. Popular

[1] *Indian Thought and Its Development*, chap. vi, pp. 97, 122.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 116.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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belief is encouraged by 'scholastic' interpretation to a greater extent than might be expected.

It is perhaps relevant, and not without significance, to state that this was not the conclusion I anticipated when I began this inquiry. It seemed to me, as to others, that the general emphasis of the Hīnayāna Saṃgha, and of the Pali Canon, was towards a negative interpretation of Nibbāna. Therefore I expected to find a divergence between popular belief and monastic exposition, a latent, if not explicit, conflict. It was part of my original hypothesis to show how affirmative emphases in religion are maintained in the face of philosophical, credal definitions which might deny or discourage these emphases. Burma seemed to present a striking illustration of such a situation. Here, obviously, was a buoyant, life-affirming popular faith which claimed to be Hīnayāna Buddhism; here, too, was a long established monastic Order, firm in its allegiance to the Pali Canon. Such an allegiance, I thought, implied a negative interpretation of Buddhism and a negative conception of Nibbāna; therefore the popular faith must have persisted in disregard of this 'official' interpretation.

Further inquiry, however, has led me to doubt whether the facts substantiate this hypothesis of conflict. The initial fact, it is true, still stands. There can be little doubt about the *popular* view of Nibbāna. As Jardine remarks in a footnote to Sangermano's account, 'for a long period the masses have revolted at the conclusion (that Nibbāna means annihilation), and, in some way, which they cannot very intelligibly explain, believe that the individual soul survives death and is found in new conditions of existence.'[3] Except perhaps for the use of the term, soul, this remark, written sixty years ago, is still a fair summary of the popular attitude. What is ambiguous, what has now to be questioned in the light of the evidence which will be stated in this chapter, is the reference of the term, revolt. If it is conceived as a revolt against the teaching of the Burma Saṃgha, then the question arises whether there was, in fact, any ground or cause for such a revolt so far as a negative or positive emphasis is concerned. Monastic conceptions doubtless differed from popular conceptions. Nevertheless it would now appear that monastic interpretations in Burma left the way open to some kind of belief in personal survival in Nibbāna. In this respect, scholar and peasant were not so far apart. And if we go behind the Burmese Saṃgha and consult the Pali Canon, as it is being interpreted today in many quarters, there, too, we find ground for revised opinion: if there are passages of apparently negative import, expressed in negative terms, there are also other expositions of very different import.

[3] *Op. cit.*, chap. XIV, p. 106, footnote.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Nihilistic interpreters there may have been, especially perhaps in the Sinhalese schools. But such interpreters do not seem to have figured largely among the members of the Burma Saṃgha. The idea, therefore, of a popular, buoyant faith persisting against the discouragement of ecclesiastical or philosophical interpretation has at least to be modified, if not abandoned, in regard to Burma.

Not that scholar and peasant thought alike. For the one pursued a difficult psychological analysis, and the other clung to pictures; the one conceived Nibbāna as a heavenly *condition*, the other thought of a heavenly *place*. This, if any, is the pertinent distinction. But it is not a distinction which breeds a conflict between a negative and positive outlook. In neither case is Nibbāna annihilation.

2. *Conclusions of previous investigators*

It is illuminating to glance at the conclusions arrived at by previous Western observers in this field, for such a review shows a gradual retreat from the first unqualified impression that Nibbāna, even in the popular view, signified annihilation. There may, of course, have been a change in the Burmese outlook itself, as missionaries of other faiths, especially the Christian faith, entered the country and the people became more subject to the influence, direct and indirect, of Western thought. I doubt, however, if this is the explanation, for Bishop Bigandet, as will be seen, was convinced that the popular view, at least, was not nihilistic and Bigandet made his inquiries long before the country was penetrated by missionaries. It is much more probable that growing knowledge and opportunity gave Western observers a better understanding of what had, in fact, been the true situation all along.

One of the first reports ever recorded for the information of the West was penned by a cultured and observant American woman who arrived in the port of Rangoon early in July, 1813 and immediately began the study of the Burmese language. This was Ann Judson, the wife of the famous Baptist missionary. In a letter written to a friend in England some years later, Mrs Judson gives a brief summary of the Buddhist faith as she discerned it. She had no doubt in her mind that Nibbāna signified annihilation.

"The Burmans are Boodhists or a nation of atheists. They believe that existence involves in itself the principles of misery and destruction; consequently, there is no Eternal God. The whole universe, they say, is only destruction and re-production. It therefore becomes a wise man to raise his desires above all things that exist, and aspire to *Nipban*, the state in which there is no existence. Rewards and punishments follow

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

BURMESE KINSHIP AND THE LIFE CYCLE: AN OUTLINE

CHARLES S. BRANT AND MI MI KHAING[1]

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

121 OUR PURPOSE is to present and analyze some basic features of Burmese social organization. So numerous, elaborate and varied are the details of belief and behavior pertaining to kinship and the life cycle that to present them in a manner approximating completeness would be beyond the scope of a brief paper.

121 The material that follows, concerning the kinship system, patterns of customary behavior between various pairs of relatives, and the life cycle, is to be ●184 understood as applying to contemporary Burmese culture as it is manifested in the villages of Lower Burma. In and near the urban centers, where the secularizing [177] influences of the West have permeated indigenous custom to a greater extent, practice is likely to diverge from ideal patterns much more than in the small, homogeneous village communities. Our concern here is with the social life of the ordinary peasantry of Lower Burma. It is hoped that these data may contribute in some measure to the very scant and fragmentary knowledge of modern Burmese culture.[2]

THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

601 The basic consanguineal and affinal kinship terminologies are shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The kinship terms, corresponding to the numbers shown on the diagrams, are as follows:[3]

1. ʔaméi Mother.
2. ʔaphéi Father.
3. pharjî Parent's elder brother; parent's elder sister's husband.

[122] 1 The first-named author of this paper expresses his thanks to the Board of Foreign Scholarships for appointment to a scholarship under the Fulbright Program, making possible the field research period 1949-50 in Burma, and to the Social Science Research Council for supplementary support in the form of a World Area Research Training fellowship.

2 The interested reader is referred to Shway Yoe's *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, first published in 1882 and most recently reprinted by Macmillan & Co., London, for the only fully-rounded account of Burmese culture. See also Mi Mi Khaing, *Burmese Family* (London, 1946) for a culturally insightful narrative of life in a Burmese family.

3 For assistance in transcription of the kinship terms thanks are due Professor W. S. Cornyn. The symbols follow the system employed in his *Outline of Burmese Grammar* (Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1944).